US Army Corps of Engineers Receives OGC Vision Award

The Open GIS Consortium, Inc. (OGC) has presented the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with the first annual OGC Vision Award. LTG Robert B. Flowers, Commanding General of the USACE, accepted the award. This award recognizes the outstanding contribution the USACE has made to the organization and growth of OGC, an international public/private partnership working to make geographic information and services openly accessible across multiple platforms and devices.

LTG Robert B. Flowers (*left*) receives the OGC Vision Award from David Schell.

In 1993, the Corps' spatial technology team at the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) germinated the interoperability concept that led to the creation of the OGC. A unique Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) helped to create the OGC Specification Program, which today enables a broad representation of industry to address the geoprocessing interoperability issues and needs of the user community, of which USACE is a member. Since OGC's creation, major contributions to the OGC process have been made by the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), USACE's research community, which includes CERL and six other laboratories. ERDC has been instrumental in the creation and success of OGC's Interoperability Program, an ongoing series of testbeds, pilot projects and other activities related to the rapid development and testing of interoperability specifications.

Award ceremony attendees (*left to right*): Alan Moore, Director, CERL; Kurt Buehler, OGC; Fred Limp, University of Arkansas; M.K. Miles, Headquarters USACE; and Bill Goran, CERL.

This award recognizes not only the institutional contribution of the Corps, but also the remarkable leadership of individuals at the Corps who have helped shape OGC's vision of the future. Bill Goran at CERL provided essential early ideas and encouragement and arranged critical material support for the founding and early development of OGC programs. Kevin Backe of ERDC's Topographic Engineering Center was instrumental in launching the OGC program of interoperability testbeds and pilot projects and in bringing other agencies to work together with USACE, pooling requirements and resources to maximize the government's benefit from OGC's efforts.

LTG Robert Flowers, USACE said, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is greatly honored by this recognition for our role in helping OGC introduce interoperability into the spatial technology market. This award is reflective of the outstanding contributions the men and women of USACE make to this

nation daily, and OGC is a tremendous example of what can be accomplished when the government, industry and academia come together with a common vision. We look forward to continued involvement with OGC."

David Schell, President of OGC, said, "The spatial technology community is motivated by interest in a wide range of technology applications. Through their support of OGC, the USACE has brought the benefits of geoprocessing interoperability not only to the defense community but also to the civil sector and many public and private sector organizations and programs focused on commerce, social needs, research, and the environment. We recognize and value this humane contribution, which is not only "dual use" but one of the finest examples of the expression "to beat swords into plowshares."

OGC is an international industry consortium of more than 240 companies, government agencies and universities participating in a consensus process to develop publicly available interface specifications. OpenGIS® Specifications support interoperable solutions that "geo-enable" the Web, wireless and location-based services, and mainstream IT. The specifications empower technology developers to make complex spatial information and services accessible and useful with all kinds of applications. Visit the OGC website at www.opengis.org.

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